Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

"Solidarity," the organ of the Communists, has reappeared under the editorship of J. H. Edelmann, who expects to issue it semi-monthly.

Government, says the Augusta "Chronicle," is about the most expensive luxury that our people enjoy. A luxury is easily dispensed with, especially if it ceases to be enjoyable. Of late the most loyal governmentalists have had their enjoyment of the institution reduced to *nil*, if not changed to suffering. Will the "Chronicle" advise them to give up this "luxury"?

In a lecture on journalism, the editor of the "Sun" referred to the two kinds of newspapers between which every man must choose: "one a newspaper for sensible people; the other a newspaper for fools." Such a division, if it really existed, would simplify matters amazingly. Unfortunately, Mr. Dana was very inaccurate. He failed to mention the newspapers for knaves, those for knaves *and* fools, and those for foolish knaves and knavish fools. Newspapers for sensible and honest people are very few, and Mr. Dana is not the editor of one of them.

Mr. William W. Gordak, a comrade living at North Scituate, Mass., has written and published an eight-page pamphlet entitled "Adaptability to Environment." Though written with no pretence at style and evidently not the product of a practised literary workman, it is something much better than that, — a pungent achievement of uncommon force, wit, and originality. It offers an explanation of the existing order which, if not entirely new, is at least presented in a novel fashion, and it is well calculated to start the unwary in a course of thinking along Anarchistic lines. Send four cents in postage stamps to Mr. Gordak, and get a copy of his pamphlet.

The London "Saturday Review," that bulwark of Toryism and concentration of philistinism, has passed into progressive hands, and will abandon its traditions. Mr. Frank Harris, until lately in charge of the "Fortnightly Review," is its editor, and its politics will be somewhat more rational. The greatest gain, however, will be in the literary and dramatic departments, to which men of modern tendencies have been called. I find a review of Mr. Grundy's new play in a recent issue signed G. B. S., and the first few lines make it morally certain that our friend Bernard Shaw is the writer of the review. It goes without saying that the worship of dramatic ghosts is repudiated, and a healthy and sane critical standard raised. Thus does the revolution of the nineteenth century make even such *old* things as the "Saturday Review" new and useful.

I have imported a considerable number of copies of the new pamphlet written by an English fellow-worker, John Badcock, Jr., and offer them for sale in the advertising columns. It is entitled "Slaves to Duty," and has already received favorable notice at Liberty's hands. But again I take pleasure in cordially recommending it to my readers. Mr. Badcock has presented the propaganda of Anarchism with the only English pamphlet that it possesses which makes uncompromising assault upon morality as the strongest bulwark of monopoly, — as the chief means by which the exploiters secure the assent of the exploited to their exploitation. May it have a wide circulation in the United States, pending the time when some friend of the movement shall present it with a translation of Max Stirner's immortal "Einzige"!

The funny paragraphers of the New York dailies have been saying that Chicago is envious and jealous of New York's great police scandal. It is probable that the paragraphers are totally ignorant of the local situation in Chicago. The crusaders of that "pocket edition of hell" have, as a matter of fact, made charges against their police which nobody here ever thought of bringing even against Clubber Williams. It is believed there that the police farm out to pickpockets and thugs territory in the most crowded districts, and allow the highest bidders to ply their vocations without fear of molestation. It is also charged that, in addition to the regular system of blackmailing criminals and outlaws who are not criminals, the police officers have tried direct robbery. A member of a certain "prosecuting committee" states that "robbing has been done right and left for some time by a good many officers." Now what will New York do next?

Paul Bourget having in his "Outre-Mer" stamped certain characteristics of the people of this continent as "American," Mark Twain tells him that he is talking through his hat. "There isn't a single human characteristic that can be safely labelled 'American.' There isn't a single human ambition, or religious trend, or drift of thought, or peculiarity of education, or code of principles, or breed of folly, or style of conversation, or preference for a particular subject for discussion, or form of legs or trunk or head or face or expression or complexion, or gait, or dress, or manners, or disposition, or any other human detail, inside or outside, that can rationally be generalized as 'American.'" As even Dana will admit that Mark Twain is an authority on this subject, the crestfallen appearance of our "good Americans," after reading these comments, may be imagined. The stock-in-trade of a good many jingoists must go down disastrously.

Prof. John B. Clark, in the theory of wages commented on in another column by Mr. Yarros, adds 100 men and no capital to 1,000 men working with capital, puts them all at work as an organized body, and then declares that the extra product obtained by this addition represents "the productive power of labor apart from capital." Any child would know better. Suppose the 1,000 men to produce 100 each in a given time, or 100,000 in all. Then add 100 men, and suppose that the 1,100 men produce 95 each in the given time, or 104,500 in all. Does Prof. Clark mean to say that this extra product of 4,500 is the amount that 100 men could produce with no capital at all? This is as much as to say that 100 compositors could set 4,500 pages of type in a month, even if they had no type with which to do it. The way to find out what labor can do without capital is to set it to work without capital. It never can be found out by setting it to work with capital which other labor is using at the same time.

Arthur Brisbane (a swaggering and shallow clown in the hire of the "World") and the book-reviewer of the "Tribune" have "protested" against the arrival and lecture-tour in this country of Catulle Mendès, a brilliant French man-of-letters, on the ground of his "immorality" as a man and author. Brisbane actually hinted at the desirability of an order preventing Mendès from landing here as being more dangerous than an "Anarchist." It is not for Liberty to waste words over the impotent rage of such despicable hypocrites, but it is glad to see them rebuked by such a conservative paper as the "Recorder," whose dramatic critic refers to this incident, and makes the following reflection: "This moral spasm is very funny, especially for New York. Mendès is a most brilliant writer, a poet, and personally a gentleman. His writings are for Paris, not for the *jeune fille* of America. But to take exception to him on the lecture platform because of his books is as provincial, as parochial, as the people who won't go to see Sarah Bernhardt because of her private life. What hypocritical fudge! Little wonder we are laughed at for our vulgar pretensions, the vulgarest of which is: 'Thank God, we are not as other peoples!' — *i. e.*, the French."

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — Proudhon.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Our Financial Muddle.

The people are certainly reaping precious little advantage from the present discussion of financial questions by politicians, bankers, and reformers of the fiat-money type. The opportunity for a real educational campaign is great, but the trouble is that the educators need the education fully as much as the to-be-educated. No day passes without new plans for the solution of our monetary problem. We have had the Baltimore plan, the Carlisle scheme No. 1, the Carlisle scheme No. 2, the Walker plan, and a number of others. Every day new financial bills are offered in congress, and we are assured that the house is determined to take some kind of action in the premises. This, however, would signify very little, as the tariff struggle has demonstrated. Congress will probably fail to agree on any measure of relief more substantial than a popular loan or a new issue of bonds to another rich syndicate.

Mark how the more fundamental questions are being relegated to the rear, and how the question of retiring or funding the greenbacks is more and more monopolizing attention.

Through the greenbacks the treasury is being drained of its gold reserve, a number of absurd statutes conspiring to bring about this result. A greenback is a government promise to pay gold on demand, but there is not enough gold in the treasury to redeem one-fourth of those promises, while the law compels the secretary of the treasury to reissue them as fast as they are presented. Our financiers, with their usual depth and keenness, trace all of our present difficulties to the greenback, and have raised the cry, "down with the source and parent of the mischief!"; but, when we recollect that a year ago they were equally emphatic in their assurances that the Sherman silver-purchase law was the sole cause of the hard times and panic, our confidence in their diagnosis is considerably shaken. In fact, it is clear that the funding of the greenbacks will bring the question of currency reform still more prominently to the front, for to retire them is equivalent to contracting the currency to an intolerable degree, and for this reason it is to be hoped that congress will decide on this step. Something will be required to take the place of the greenbacks, and what will it be? This cannot be answered without an overhauling of the whole subject of bank circulation, standard of value, security, etc.

While the self-styled honest-money men cannot speak of the greenbacks without grinding their teeth, the fiatists, on the other hand, are ready to lay down their lives for the sacred greenback. Possibly the destruction of the greenback would render life not worth living to them. Is it not the grand object-lesson in fiat, inconvertible money? Does it not prove their claim that government can retire the bankers having special privileges, and itself assume the whole task of supplying currency based on the faith and credit of — the taxpayers? I wonder if a government that relinquished the function of issuing fiat money would at all possess the affection of these reformers.

But, whether the fiatists or "honest-money" men carry the day, the financial problem will be as far from settlement as ever. The bankers prate about the security of their circulation, and the fiatists about the power of the banks to manipulate the currency in their own interest. But the real source of the trouble is completely overlooked by both of the contending parties. True reform involves the creation of a safe, abundant, and convertible currency. All three elements are indispensable, and the absence of any one is subversive of financial stability and orderly industrial progress. So long as the fiction of a gold basis is adhered to, these three elements cannot coexistent. There may be a safe currency redeemable in gold, but it will be totally inadequate for the business of the world, and a money famine will be the chronic condition of industrial life. There may be an abundant currency, but it will not necessarily be safe or convertible. If not, it will breed panics and stifle credit. There is no alternative but to abandon that mischievous delusion, that relic of ignorance, the gold basis, and give a new meaning to the term convertibility, — by substituting products for gold in the implied formula. By all means insist on the certainty of redemption of every note issued, but on redemption in things actually needed and used in exchange, — industrial products. In other words, let currency be based on, or secured by, products, and let it be redeemable in products. The standard of value may still be gold, or it may be anything else that satisfies the requirements of a standard as absolutely as possible; but let it be understood that the thing serving as a standard need not necessarily be a basis, and that the basis need not be a standard. Gold can serve as a standard, but it cannot continue to serve as an exclusive basis. It never has so served, in point of fact.

The recognition of these facts would deprive the fiatists of their occupation, and the monopolists of their illegitimate power of taxation. The government could not issue currency redeemable in products, since it hasn't any products. Whatever it grabs, it consumes. On the other hand, contraction of the currency by a privileged confraternity would be impossible, there being no restraint on the issue of currency by anyone having marketable values. At present, however, we are between the devil and the deep sea, — the deluded fiatists standing for government money, and the monopolists seeking to perpetuate their power.

V. Y.

Currency and Its Convertibility.

To avoid misunderstanding, it should be stated that, when Mr. Yarros, in the preceding article, urges the substitution of convertibility into products for convertibility into gold as a quality of the circulating medium, he does not refer at all to that convertibility in point of right which is guaranteed by the issuer of a note, but simply to that convertibility in point of fact which exists when a note finds ready circulation. He means to say that the currency of a mutual bank, while not redeemable in gold on demand at the bank, will be to all intents and purposes redeemable in products on demand at the store of every dealer. His position is correct, but his new use of the words "convertibility" and "redeemability" will lead to much misunderstanding when not accompanied by such an explanation as that which I have just given.

A similar use of these terms in a previous article by Mr. Yarros led a Philadelphia correspondent to ask me what, even supposing that gold were retained as a standard of value, would maintain the equality of a paper dollar with a gold dollar if the paper dollar were redeemable, not in gold, but in commodities. The gentleman evidently supposed Mr. Yarros to mean that mutual currency would be redeemed in commodities by the bank. If such were the case, then, to be sure, the value of the mutual money would be measured, not by gold, but by the commodities in which the bank agreed to redeem it. Gold in that case would no longer be the standard of value, its function as such being performed instead by the commodity chosen by the bank for redemption purposes. My correspondent was guilty of an absurdity in supposing gold to be still the standard in such a case, but he was led into this absurdity by Mr. Yarros's use of the term "convertibility," which was not easily intelligible to one not perfectly familiar with the mutual-banking idea.

Mutual money will be expressed in terms of some chosen standard of value; if gold be chosen, then in terms of gold. It will be based, not necessarily or probably on gold, but on notes given by the borrowers and secured by mortgage on the borrowers' property. It will not be redeemable in gold on demand at the bank. It will circulate readily, and without depreciation, if the bank has a good standing with the community and with the clearing-house. It will be redeemed, in the vast majority of cases, by a re-exchange of it for the borrowers' notes against which it was originally issued. That is, the borrower himself will present at the bank notes equivalent to those which he received from the bank, and will get in exchange the notes which he gave to the bank and a cancellation of the mortgage on his property. If he does not do this, the mortgage on his property will be foreclosed, and the property will be sold at auction. It will be sold for gold, if gold is what the holders of the bank's notes desire. And it is this fact — that such a sale of the property insures an ultimate

redemption in gold if demanded — which will maintain the equality of mutual money with gold.

The liability to misinterpretation is increased by Mr. Yarros's statement that "the government could not issue currency redeemable in products, since it hasn't any products." The implication here is that a mutual bank issuing currency redeemable in products must have products. But this is contrary to the mutual banking idea, and equally contrary, I am sure, to the meaning that Mr. Yarros intended to convey, — namely, that the government could not issue currency that would circulate, to borrowers mortgaging no property for its security. The Anarchists maintain that government should not engage in the business of issuing money, but there is nothing in the nature of mutual banking that makes it impossible for the government to carry it on; and, if it decided to carry it on, it would not need products (beyond those mortgaged by borrowers) in order to issue a circulating currency any more than a private banking enterprise would need them. The statement of Mr. Yarros tends to confirm the reader in the mistaken idea that under mutual banking the bank notes will be redeemed in products at and by the bank. T.

Progress of College Professors.

To the student of professional human nature the meetings of the American Economic Association are a source of considerable encouragement. College "economists" — for the moving spirits of this mutual admiration society invariably refer to each other as economist so-and-so, although the "economist's" name and fame may be limited by the geography of the village within which the little college harboring him is situated — cannot rationally be expected to keep fully abreast of the times, but the logic of events undoubtedly does affect them somewhat. As the years roll by; as events, pregnant with significance and results, succeed each other; as economic and social forces arise and grow, — the slow-but-sure observers unconsciously modify their very nebulous opinions and adapt themselves to the new conditions. It thus comes to pass that you find them expressing ideas at one time which a few years previously they repudiated with scorn and impatience as the concentration of ignorance and imbecility. Always successful in maintaining a characteristic vagueness about their creeds, they nevertheless exhibit unmistakable symptoms of progress. They are bound to remain behind, but they try to be not too far behind.

Everybody who has watched the proceedings of the peripatetic economists of the Association knows that they are ever on the fence. They are not brazen advocates of the existing industrial system; they do not ignore unpleasant facts altogether; but they never have anything definite to say in regard to imperative reforms either in the direction of State Socialism or in that of liberty. They make suggestions, to be sure, but of such an intangible nature that nobody can be blamed for declining to attempt to reduce them to definiteness. It is simple truth to say that the college economists, whether as individuals or in associations organized for the very purpose of leading and guiding the active men of the world, have the least influence of any force in the community. The resolution of a board of trade, of a local trades union, of a public meeting, counts for more than the elaborate, solemn, and impressive outgivings of professional associations. Can it be that the world is perversely and ignorantly unjust to them? No, they are not needed, because what they offer is all cloud, mist, and fog. Their buts and ifs and perhapses and yets are not calculated to inspire confidence.

Now, if men thus freed from the compulsion of sharing in the battle of interests and ideas nevertheless reflect the progressive changes of society, the fact is peculiarly interesting to those who do play some part in the human social drama, and who never dreamed of eliciting the commendation of the severe philosophers living in a world of their own. To reformers and to labor generally the addresses delivered before the recent meeting of the American Economic Association are full of significance from this point of view. The presidential address of "Economist John B. Clark" of Amherst dealt with the question of the relation of law to economics, and formulated the latest view of the Association on the whole labor movement. In a general way the position was taken that the trouble with present arrangements lies, not in the element of competition, but in the restrictions hedging free industry. Not State control, we were told, was needed, but the elimination of monopoly and privilege. If free competition prevailed, labor would obtain its normal rate of wages. But the trusts successfully keep down the rate of wages by dislocating labor, and the State should suppress the trusts and rescue the unorganized employees now at the mercy of the powerful combinations. The conditions under which trusts thrive were not inquired into, nor was the precise method indicated whereby trusts might be rendered harmless. Although Prof. Clark talked a great deal about monopoly, it does not appear that he distinguishes between the scientific definition of the term and that erroneously used in popular denunciation of trusts. "Suppression of trusts by legislation" smacks of invasive regulation, which is of course worse than futile. It is something, however, to get an admission from the Association that the trusts are not benefactors of the race, who flourish because their economy and skill diffuse comfort and raise the standard of living, but greedy and arrogant plutocrats, who, under present conditions, are a menace to the community. The attention of such fakirs as Dana and Gunton should be directed to these heresies of the Economic Association.

Still more remarkable was the treatment of labor organization by Prof. Clark. It is natural that he should have condemned violence in strikes, but, unlike such pseudo-individualists as Godkin, he thoroughly justified the method of the strike without drawing any fallacious distinctions between local and sympathetic strikes. He deplored labor's short-sightedness in not regulating its demands by the scientific standard of wages, and regretted that it is not more thoroughly and efficiently organized. Think of all this from the Economic Association! A few years ago the economists scoffed at the idea of labor organization, and learnedly argued that it was a plain negation of the most central principles of economics, a gross absurdity. The notion that you could raise wages by organizing and striking was utterly wild and vicious, contrary to the instincts of a sturdy freeman. The intelligent American workman saw clearly that nature regulated wages, and organization was a foreign idea of law parentage. Now the Association tells us that organized labor is an Economic Force (note the capital letters), — indeed the *only* Economic Force of any importance, — and regrets only the fact that, through insufficient economic knowledge, labor is often led to commit blunders and fail in its worthiest efforts. What a pity it is that the approval of the Association is of as little consequence as its displeasure! Otherwise, organized labor might anticipate a great boom.

In its suggestions to labor, advanced with the kind intention of enabling it to achieve greater success on legitimate lines, the Association was as uncertain and unsatisfactory as in its directions to the State regarding the suppression of trusts. Prof. Clark presented an argument that was meant to be very profound on the normal rate of wages. The economists, he asserted, knew that there was a standard rate, and it is impossible for labor to carry the day when it arbitrarily seeks to compel the payment of a higher rate. Let labor learn what the standard rate is and always insist on it; more it cannot get, less it ought not to receive. And what is that normal rate known to the Association? Prof. Clark propounded a brand-new theory of wages, containing no trace of the theories once in vogue. He stated it thus in substance:

> In a factory that employs a thousand men let us leave the amount of capital unchanged, but add one hundred men to the working force. The men thus added represent a definite increase, say n, in the output of the mill. It produces n yards of cloth per day in addition to its former output; the value of this extra product measures the productive power of labor apart from capital. More than the value of n yards of cloth the employer cannot pay to the new men as wages; if he pays more, he incurs a loss. As much as this he is obliged to pay if competition exists.

The hundred men thus must, under free competition, get the value of n yards of cloth, and each of these men will have one hundredth part of n. The standard rate of wages, therefore, is the value of n divided by a hundred. Let labor, by organization, peaceful strikes, etc., enforce this rate, and justice will be done.

It is evident that, if we assume this theory to be true, Prof. Clark's suggestion amounts to the putting of the cart before the horse. In a complex industrial system it is impossible to determine the rate by the method indicated. There is only one way of enforcing it, and that is by securing and enforcing free competition. Under free competition the laborer would command the normal rate, because things would automatically adjust themselves. Without free competition, as Prof. Clark admits, the rate cannot be enforced. The real inference from the propositions is that labor's salvation lies in free competition, and that a condition precedent to strikes against employers is a general strike against legal privilege and monopoly. I wonder if the Association intended this, and if it is prepared to accept the inevitable conclusion from Prof. Clark's premises.

As to the scientific value of the new theory

of wages, it cannot be fairly discussed at present. We should require its full and accurate statement, and that will appear in the published report of the proceedings. The inadequate statement above, taken from a newspaper report, is obscure and incomplete. According to it, the hundred men added to the force get as wages the full product of their labor; and, since each of them gets the *standard* rate, we are bound to infer that the other workmen — that *all* workmen — also get the full value of their product. Yet Prof. Clark hardly intends that, or he would not, in his illustration, have introduced the condition of "leaving the amount of capital unchanged." This condition would seem to imply that capital divides the product with labor. But if so, the wages of the men added to the force without an increase of capital will be regulated by the wages of those already employed, and they will get less than the full product of their labor. There cannot be two rates.

This, however, is merely in passing. The printed page of the report is necessary for intelligent discussion of this wage theory. This article is written to inform the world that even the college economists are learning some things and bearing witness to the silent revolution going on in society. These economists profess to guide, but no one should be deluded into listening to them. In reality they are meek followers, and the only way to compel them to advance is to pursue the even tenor of our way and proceed along the lines already chosen. Where will the Association stand ten years hence? V. Y.

Narrowing the Interest Issue.

To the Editor of Liberty:

To the three questions propounded to me in your issue of December 15 I make answer and say:

To the first: That the loans of the banks supposed would cost them nothing but running expenses and incidental outlays and losses. But such banks are only possible under the three conditions mentioned, neither of which is supposable without a motive to derive some profit or advantage therefrom; unless indeed they were compelled by penalty, which is in accord neither with economy or equal freedom.

To the second: It is probable that a discount of one-half of one per cent. per annum would meet the cost of such banking. But why should bankers, or their employees, be expected to work for bare support, while producers should have, when in excess of such support, the whole product of their labor, and so add to their capital the interest, not of the capital, but of their labor?

To the third: In the absence of State or collective meddling, competition would *tend* unquestionably to reduce discount to its lowest term, which would ordinarily be something above cost. Otherwise at the vanishing point the banks also would disappear, though under the impulse of fierce competition they might sometimes discount, "sporadically," at cost, or even at a loss. The editor's words on economic rent seem appropriate here: "I believe that economic rent exists now, and would continue under freedom, but then with a tendency to decrease." Substitute interest for rent, and you have the case of economic interest, as distinguished from plutocratic interest.

Where land is embraced in the term capital, no casuistry can show a distinction between interest and rent; nor where interest is paid on mortgaged premises. The measure of both is the same. This measure, as given by economists, is highly misleading. Superior and inferior soils have very little to do with it. One man will starve on land of the same quantity and quality as those of the land from which another will obtain an increase over his support. Rent from urban and suburban places, and even much rural rent, has absolutely nothing whatever to do with the quality of land. In the latter case, it is largely owing to the necessity for restoring exhausted fertility and decaying premises. Increase is determined by facility for coöperation and the practical division of labor, by the degree of utility of novel appliances employed, and by wise adaptation of capacity to special work. Bankers no more than laborers can rationally be expected to work without reasonable expectation of having their capital increased thereby. But, whatever the associated banks might do for each other, it is illogical in the extreme to suppose that they will discount gratis the non-circulating credits of others with their well-established circulating credits. Those who have little credit or capital will be taxed, not according to cost of doing business, but according to their needs, under freedom as under law. Legal or combination rule may mitigate or aggravate, but cannot help their condition permanently. Their only escape is to cease borrowing.

It is quite true that without capital or credit the laborer might not be able to earn starvation wages; but it does not follow that therefore there must be some increase which arises from capital. And if such increase arises from capital, why not allow capital to have it? The editor must be aware that there is an obverse side to the capital and increase question. In a majority of cases the capital "comes home missing," or is not maintained intact. Failures are not especially experienced by those who start in their industrial career without capital, but rather by those who start with borrowed or inherited capital. Not capital, then, in kind or quality is the measure of interest, but the capacity and adaptability of the labor to it. Since the editor's principal premise is found to be erroneous, my contention is relieved of the several dilemmas in which the other five questions seek to involve it. The intrepid and ingenious worker, under freedom, will find or create the conditions and helps necessary to increase his wealth, or more desirable satisfaction, while the indolent or unwise one may only see his inherited or borrowed wealth disappear. Is it the capital or labor which has made or failed to make the increase? Surely, capital proves a most indeterminate factor as a self-creator.

I submit that, in distinguishing between economic interest and that which is the fruit of monopoly, the earning of the toiler from the plunder of the spoiler, I have invaded no right to use the old term without the qualifying phrase; I oppose that as strenuously as Liberty can. My idea explains many phenomena in wealth acquirement unexplainable by any extant theory, and is not to be accounted for as sporadic or epidemic. To me it appears the key which will open the doors of prosperity and happiness to the misguided and plundered toilers, who have but the sense and the courage to enter.

I should deeply regret the discontinuance of Liberty, or to see the doughty knight disheartened who has so long, and against fearful odds, upheld the hopeful standard, and helped me at advanced age to jump the ruts of absurd politico-economic superstitions. I should equally deplore seeing Liberty become authoritarian, or philosophical Anarchy a fossilized ism.

The power of the State or collectivity to levy tribute, collect rack-rent, evict from land and home, enforce exhaustive usury, and aid plutocrats to plunder the increase labor has produced, is no *non-essential*, past, present, or future. The "common consent" to the exercise of these powers must be withdrawn ere we can have any salutary change in our industry, commerce, or finance. I trust that this assumption will not imperil Liberty or Anarchy. Let us have freedom, whether it will give us circulating credit without paying for its use or no.

Glenora, N. Y. J. K. Ingalls.

Intent upon my purpose of keeping the issue narrowed, I shall ignore for the present everything in the foregoing article except the answers to my three questions.

To my first question Mr. Ingalls answers that the bank of my hypothesis could issue its notes at a cost not exceeding its running expenses and incidental losses. So far, then, my claim is sustained. But he answers further that such a bank could not exist in the absence of a motive for its existence. It remains for me, then, only to supply the motive. The task is easy. The thousand business men of my hypothesis would unite to form a bank of issue, and would connect this bank of issue with other similar banks for clearing purposes, because thereby they could establish a collective credit having circulating power, which each of them could obtain in exchange for his equally good but less reputable individual credit, having to pay therefor nothing but the cost of this exchange of credits. In other words, these business men would form such a bank as I describe in order to borrow money at less than one per cent. instead of paying, as they do now, from four to fifteen per cent. Is the motive sufficient?

To my second question Mr. Ingalls answers that the cost above referred to would probably be met by a discount of one-half of one per cent. Sustained again. I have not to discuss here why bank employees "should be expected to work for bare support." It suffices for the argument to know that what these employees are now willing to accept for their services can be paid to them out of funds provided by a discount of one-half of one per cent. And this Mr. Ingalls admits. When we have exhausted the present issue, then I will consider with him how many tears I can afford to shed over the sad fate of those bank presidents for whom a discount of one-half of one per cent. provides salaries of only ten, fifteen, and twenty thousand dollars.

To my third question Mr. Ingalls answers that under free conditions competition would *tend* to reduce discount to its lowest term, — ordinarily something above cost. I take it that Mr. Ingalls means by this that in banking — a business which under freedom is accompanied by no physical conditions that place a natural limit upon competition — the force of competition would have a tendency of the same strength as that which it has in other businesses similarly free from physical limitations, — in other words, that the tendency would be strong enough to cause the price to hover around the cost limit, now rising a little above it, now falling a little below it, but averaging cost, or perhaps a shade more. If this is his meaning, then I am sustained again.

The discussion now centres, therefore, upon the following question, which I put to Mr. Ingalls:

Is the desire to borrow money at less than one per cent., instead of at four per cent. or more, a sufficient consideration to induce business men to form such banks as I have described?

If Mr. Ingalls answers that it is not, he must show why it is not. If he answers that it is, then the proposition which, according to Mr. Ingalls, has never been demonstrated, will have received its demonstration, — the proposition, namely, that free and mutual banking will make it possible to procure capital without paying for its use (the discount being charged, not for the use of capital, but to meet expenses incidental to the transfer of capital). T.

A Political Confession.

To the Editor of Liberty:

If that which I have said before does not fully define my political standpoint, I fear it is not well possible to comply with your request of December 29.

My ideal of "government" is a social organization

whose functions are strictly confined to the prevention of infraction of equal freedom. I am opposed to compulsory taxation, except when a delinquent demands and receives a social service and then refuses to pay its proper value. In a few details my opinion differs from yours as to the line that separates proper acts from those that infringe equal freedom. It is my conviction that there will always be men who will infringe equal freedom in the absence of restraint, and that for this reason a protective organization will always be necessary; that upon the same territory only one such organization can be maintained; that this organization must possess, at least physically, the power to invade, and that for this reason the temptation to invade will always exist, on the part of the officers of that organization. The present government is such an organization, in which, however, the abuse of power is very prominent; but, so long as the majority of people are as ignorant upon social topics as they show themselves to be, it is my opinion that, were the present government abolished and a protective organization established on the basis of the law of equal freedom, it would in a short time assume a form not unlike the present organization. Of course, the invasive feature of the present State is as abhorrent to me as it is to you; but, since the State not only invades, but also in many respects performs precisely that which a purely protective organization ought to do, it appears to me incomparably easier to remove the invasive factors from the existing organization than to begin experimenting on your plan, and you will find all my efforts consistent with this conviction. The end I wish to attain is identical with yours. Apart from a few debatable differences of opinion on details, we only differ in the method we consider best for attaining the end.

HUGO BILGRAM.

[Mr. Bilgram has misunderstood my request. I did not ask him for a generalized statement of his political aims and methods. I asked him to state specifically what function he wishes government to perform in the matter of banking. And he gives me no answer. I await one. Meantime I may say to Mr. Bilgram that I also am working to "remove the invasive factors from the existing organization." What I want to find out is whether Mr. Bilgram wishes to add any invasive factors to it. About that I shall know more when he has answered my question. — EDITOR LIBERTY.]

Logic from the Bench.

The example set by S. H. Randall in Cincinnati, in refusing to serve as a juror, was followed lately by a citizen of Brooklyn, whose little passage with the court is thus narrated by a New York daily newspaper:

Judge Henry A. Moore, who had been ill for a month, resumed his place yesterday on the bench in the court of sessions in Brooklyn, and swore in the grand jury. Benjamin B. Eaton asked to be excused from serving on the jury, explaining that he had religious scruples against sitting in judgment on his fellow-men.

"Well," said Judge Moore, "if all men were like you, the criminals would have a high carnival."

"I can't help it," Mr. Eaton replied. "If others wish to do so, they may, but I won't. My conscience forbids me. It's only a matter of time when all persons will come around to my way of thinking."

Mr. Eaton was excused.

Evidently Judge Moore arose from his bed of sickness before he had fully recovered that logical acumen which is supposed to be a mental characteristic of those who sit upon the bench. For he could hardly have meant to insinuate either that Mr. Eaton is a criminal, or that the high carnival, in the case supposed, would be held by the criminal women and children. And yet no other hypothesis leaves any logic in the remark that, if all men were like Mr. Eaton, the criminals would hold high carnival. To the intellect of the layman it would seem that, if *all* men were like Mr. Eaton, there would be no criminals to hold high carnival. T.

For a time the anti-press laws passed by the panic-stricken French parliament after the Carnot assassination were enforced with extreme and unrelenting rigor. Now, according to Harold Frederic, who is the keenest and most cultivated American correspondent abroad, they are virtually dead letters. Their effect, he says, has been "only to aggravate the abuses at which they were aimed. It is impossible for the courts to take cognizance of a hundredth part of the insults and libels daily hurled at the president, the premier, and everybody else in authority. The old era of denunciation is in full swing again." But such lessons do not prevent half-crazy Emperor Williams from pushing similar bills and expecting to get rid of revolutionary agitation and criticism by restricting free speech and press.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, 38 Council Hall, Oberlin, Ohio.

The "Good Citizen," to which Section B wrote in September to answer the question, "Who is the Anarchist?" announces this as one of the subjects of articles to be published in the February number. Large bodies move slowly.

A letter of mine, written to the same address that I gave the Corps, comes back through the Dead Letter Office. I have heard of one similar case in another section. Therefore those who send me targets with the address not fully given must not bear malice if I prefer to use others. I may sometimes give targets with scanty addresses, but not if I can get equally good ones with full address.

The editor of the "Single Tax Courier" knows all about us. He announces the utter failure of the A. L. W. C., tells the news about Bolton Hall as a target, and adds, "Two or three other Single Taxers have recently been made targets, and have yet heard only from Byington himself." I can see a reason, though not an especially probable one, why Mr. Horr, the target of Section C (to which I now belong), may have received no letters but mine. Of the two others who seem to be referred to, Mr. Groh says he heard from at least two of Section A, and I would rather have the news in more definite form before believing that none of Section B wrote to Mr. Freeland. I shall not order a hearse for the funeral of the A. L. W. C. till we have tried the new blood that has lately come in; but I do not think that even our old members are anywhere near so dead as the "Courier" thinks.

To the man who doesn't join the A. L. W. C. because he has no faith in this method of work.

DEAR SIR, — I believe that our work is useful in the following ways:

It enables us to correct misapprehensions in the minds of many who will never be reached by Liberty's small circulation.

It gives our ideas a hearing. I believe that they have power to make their way much farther than they have gone, if simply brought before people's minds, even though not backed by argument. I believe it is their sheer unfamiliarity, more than any other one thing, that is keeping them back. A target who receives several letters, presenting our propositions as viewed by different writers, must give our ideas a place among those known to him, even if not accepted by him; and then they will sooner or later color his thought and words.

By sending several letters to one man or paper we produce a greater impression of strength, and gain more attention, than if we sent only one to each.

By writing from several different States to a paper we sometimes get the editor to print our letters for the sake of showing how widely the influence of his paper is felt.

Letter-writing to papers and prominent men is the most effective thing we can do toward making our ideas familiar to the general public. As I said just now, such familiarity would be enough to greatly increase the number of our supporters, even if not backed by argument. (For this reason, by the way, I think that the most important part of an ideal A. L. W. C. letter at present is clear explanation, not the bringing of considerations to support the point explained.)

You will be more regular in such work, and do more of it, by setting yourself to fulfil a task set in every number of Liberty than by any irregular plan of writing.

I want your name on my roll, rather than to have you doing the same work without my knowledge, so that I may plan the work with a clear idea of what the forces under my direction are.

Of course, our shots often, perhaps usually, fail to make any visible impression. But this is only the old law of the preaching of new ideas. "The sower sows the word. And some fell along the trodden path, where birds picked it up; and some on rocky ground, where it could not take deep root; and some where thorns grew with it and smothered it; and some in good ground, where it bore thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold." Whether the man who said that was or was not divine, he certainly understood human nature and the art of propagandism; and, if there is any way of spreading a new gospel among the people without coming under this rule, I do not know it. The man who never wastes any strength will never do much in this field.

Target, Section A. — H. B. Loud, editor of the "Independent," Rockland, Mass., in her issue of December 28, published the following under the heading, "Anarchy":

In the "Fortnightly Review," of October, Ouida has a very strong article on the "Legislation of Fear," in which she portrays in vivid colors the tyranny of all government, and the outrages to which so-called Anarchists are subjected.

And in the following she gives the gist of the philosophy which is the guide of the editor of this paper.

"'Two things are necessary to this country, — liberty and government,' said Casimir-Perier in his opening address. He might have added that no one has ever yet succeeded in making the two dwell in unison. Liberty and government are dog and cat; there can be no amity or affinity between them."

It is an article worth reading and considering.

It strikes me that the editor means to say, in terms clear enough to a careful reader, that she is an Anarchist; but she might not print letters calling her so. Commend her position, and carry out in your own way the ideas she expresses.

Section B. — "The Union," 305-307 Hennepin ave., Minneapolis, Minn., a Knights of Labor paper, is strongly interested in money. Write on free money, or on liberty as the best thing for laborers.

Section C. — T. J. Boltz, editor of the "Ottumwa Daily World," Ottumwa, Iowa, a Populist paper somewhat liberal and knows something about Anarchism. Write letters showing his readers the advantages of any Anarchistic reform.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

Anarchism in the Denver Convention.

The correspondent who reported the recent convention of the American Federation of Labor for the "Voice" recognized the influence of the Anarchists, in the following paragraph:

An element which, though not wholly new in Federation conventions, has made itself effective in this one, is that which demands extension of economic liberty instead of the usual restrictions, with State management of industries, made by the Socialists. The active men of this new wing, McCraith, Cohen, Greenhalgh, Linehan, O'Sullivan, Weissmann, and Sullivan, are this evening enjoying, on the one hand, congratulations as promoters of the old-time ideas of American liberty, and, on the other, denunciations from the Socialists as advocates of Anarchism.

"The garden of the laws is full of ironical plants, of unexpected flowers; and by no means its slightest charm is this subversion of the natural order, whereby appear at the end of stems and branches fruit just the opposite of that which is promised by the essence of the tree or bush. The apple-tree bears figs, and the cherry-tree medlars; violet-plants yield sweet potatoes, and hollyhocks salsify. It is delicious." — SÉVERINE.

The Beauties of Government.

☞ *The readers of Liberty are urgently invited to contribute to this department. It is open to any statement of facts which exhibit the State in any phase of its fourfold capacity of fool, meddler, knave, and tyrant. Either original accounts based upon the writer's own knowledge, or apparently reliable accounts clipped from recent publications, are welcome*

JUDICIAL ENCROACHMENT.

To the Editor of Liberty:

There is in the State of New York a law that the board of supervisors of any county shall provide rooms, properly lighted and heated, for the use of the county court, with a proviso that, in case such board shall neglect to do so, the court may order it done and make it a charge to the county.

Yates county has a court-house, not of modern style, which has served the purpose for a generation or two. Repairs and improvements have been made from time to time. It is acknowledged by the local press that the heating is not efficient in the severest cold weather, and that the ventilation is poor, but that it cannot be said that the board have at any time neglected to do what had been required of them.

Now comes Justice Davy of the circuit court, and, without notice to the board of supervisors, makes peremptory order that the court-house shall be repaired, after certain plans and specifications by a high-toned architect of Rochester, without submission to the board, but to a commission appointed by the court and consisting of three lawyers who practise at the bar. The board is ordered, however, to assess the taxpayers of the county to foot the bill.

It is supposed that the expense of such repairs will amount to some $6,000, — more than one quarter of enough to build them a court-house of modern style, such as the supervisors were proposing to erect the coming season.

A general impression has heretofore prevailed that our government was divided into three coördinate branches, distinct and specialized in their functions. In this case the judge appears to have manufactured the law, tried and given judgment for the delinquency, and appointed the executors of the decree. The courts, having virtually abolished trial by jury, especially where a question arises between the State and an individual, may assume the functions of the legislature and direct the action of the executive, either of which, by the way, when they get *plebs* in their hands, are slow to recognize any power but their own. Although kicking at what they regard an abuse of power, the county papers seem at a loss whether to denounce the order as a judicial outrage or to demand a repeal of the law from the legislature. They should do both. J. K. A.

[In a republic the functions of a monarch are discharged by the judiciary.]

NO WONDER THERE IS A DEFICIT.

[New York Sun.]

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10. — Postmaster-General Bissell has been making serious charges against the Agricultural Department, which Secretary Morton, after an investigation, admits to be true, but which he promises shall not occur again. The law limits packages of fourth-class matter sent by ordinary citizens to four pounds, but the officials of the government may use the mails for the transportation of packages of any size or weight. Under this authority it appears that a party of weather bureau explorers out West sent all their saddles and bridles, tents and camp equipage, cooking utensils, bedding, and scientific instruments by mail from some point in Nevada to the city of Washington, in order to economize the appropriation from which their expenses are paid. But it cost the government very much more to carry them in the postal cars than the freight charges would have been had they been shipped in the regular way. Mr. Bissell brought the matter up at the cabinet meeting the other day, and the president, with the rest of them, thought they had a good joke on Mr. Morton. The secretary of the interior considered it excessively funny, but a few days later Mr. Morton had his turn to laugh, for Mr. Bissell brought in another report showing that a party belonging to the geological survey had sent their whole outfit home by mail, including several tons of mineral specimens and a lot of crowbars, shovels, and picks. This little transaction saved the geological survey a lot of money in freight charges, but cost the post-office department $1,300. And that wasn't the worst of it. It is the custom to pay the railway companies for transporting the mails by gross weight, the tonnage taken on certain days being used as an average to calculate the compensation for the month. It so happened that, on the day the crowbars and mineral specimens went through, the mails were weighed for that month, and the department had to pay the railroad company for that amount of mail every day following until another test was made.

[At the same time that the post-office department is carrying the government's rocks and crowbars without charge but at great cost, the postmaster of New York is using his influence to secure a change in the law, whereby the letter-postage rate may be charged for carrying printed circulars. This would be another bribe offered to the newspapers. Anything that makes it expensive to advertise by circular tends to increase the newspapers' advertising patronage.]

THE REWARD OF ABILITY.

[New York Sun.]

NEW BRUNSWICK, Jan. 8. — At the investigation today of the methods of the board of freeholders, Capt. Joseph Castner, who has been a member of the board from the fifth ward, this city, for several terms, admitted that he had charged the county 301 days out of 365 for work that sometimes involved no more labor than walking across a bridge and "seeing that the grass was kept green." Capt. Castner answered the question, "Were there any days for which you did not charge the county $2?" with "Oh, yes I went fishing six days, and I did not charge for them."

Freeholder Kelly said that he had charged the county $2 for writing an order for a pair of shoes for a jail prisoner, and that he had often charged $2 for simply walking over the Albany street bridge, although the work on that structure had been completed and there were bridge tenders there.

It was brought out that members of the county records committee had put in a total of 411 days at $2 a day supervising the work of two girls and a man while they bound the records. The binding cost about $300, and the supervision over $800.

[And why shouldn't it? Does not Mr. Mallock tell us that it is the ability to boss a job that creates nearly all the wealth?]

ANOTHER OF THE SAME SORT.

[New York Sun.]

PATERSON, Jan. 13. — The members of the Passaic County board of chosen freeholders, who vacated their places a few years ago in accordance with the new freeholder law, are charged with malfeasance in office and corruption by residents of West Milford township. These have petitioned Judge Dixon of the Passaic County circuit court to make an investigation. They assert that the ex-freeholders robbed the county through false contracts and bills. They say individual freeholders received unlimited power to make bridge repairs, and that bridges not in need of repairs were reported to be defective. A plank was nailed over a small hole in the flooring, or a few shovelfuls of earth were thrown in, they say, and bills amounting to hundreds of dollars were presented to the county for the work.

A SALARY FOR DOING NOTHING.

[New York Evening Post.]

A man has been on the city payroll for six years, drawing a salary of $2,500 in punctual monthly instalments, who lives outside the city and does not perform any of the work of his office, nor even visit the scene of his nominal duties. He has done this by farming out the work to a substitute who is content with the incidental perquisites of the place.

Charles B. Collar, one of the official supreme court stenographers, is the man, and his name has been on the city's civil list for years. Yet he has not been seen in the court to which he is assigned — Part II. of the circuit — for more than four years. People who do not know that Mr. Collar has been lame from his birth are apt to address as Mr. Collar the young man who has done Mr. Collar's work in Part II. to the satisfaction of the judges and the bar. This man — Rawlins by name — was employed by Collar half a dozen years ago to take "check notes," — *i. e.*, notes of the testimony at the same time with Collar, — in order either that the transcribing might be expedited, or that the official stenographer's notes might be verified. Rawlins proved accurate, and Collar, who was getting old, fell gradually into the habit of absenting himself from his post in court, while Rawlins did the work. To make the story short, an arrangement was made finally by which Rawlins was to do the official reporting, while Collar kept on drawing the salary. Rawlins was to collect and keep for himself the fees collected from lawyers for transcriptions of the trial notes to be used in preparing cases on appeal, the legal charge for which is ten cents per one hundred words. Whether he gets all this money is not known.

The justices of the supreme court, who have the appointing of the court stenographers, have not, so far as is known, forbidden Collar to draw a salary without working for it, or considered whether the substitute is competent to assume all the responsibility, honor, and emoluments of the position he practically fills. The question is asked why a salary should be paid by the city at all, if a competent man can be induced to do the work for the incidental perquisites.

[One wonders why this question is asked, since it can be so easily answered. The reason that the city does this is that the doing of such things as this is the main purpose of the city's existence. Some people foolishly suppose that the city exists to maintain order and cleanliness and health. Nothing of the kind. These things are only pretences behind which to maintain parasites.]

A FENCE OF OFFENCE REQUIRED BY LAW.

[New York Sun.]

WORCESTER, Mass., Jan. 13. — A force of men set to work at 11 o'clock last night building a fence around the Union Railroad station in this city, in compliance with the law which specifies that, to maintain title to land, individuals and corporations must enclose their noldings at least once in twenty years.

Indignant citizens lodged a protest at police headquarters, and Mayor Henry A. Marsh and Chief of Police Raymond consulted City Solicitor Hopkins, who gave it as his opinion that the Boston and Albany corporation had an undoubted right to erect the fence, which must remain standing twenty-four hours to meet the requirements of the statutes.

In the meantime street traffic and the passage of the electric cars in Washington square are impeded.

NO FOREIGNERS NEED APPLY.

[New York Sun.]

The street-cleaning department had 1,600 men out at work yesterday and last night, shovelling and carting away the snow on the streets. In addition to these 1,600 men, 800 carts were engaged in the work, and, as each cart had a driver, the total number of men was 2,400. Commissioner Andrews was a sad and dejected man. He had been up until after four o'clock yesterday morning overseeing the work on Broadway.

"I tell you," he said, "this is getting disheartening. It is the first time that we have had to work three days getting the snow from Broadway, and then have the job only half done. It is all on account of the law compelling us to hire none but American citizens. Why, the class of workmen who apply here are no good. They are mostly all these Bowery bums who haven't had a square meal in a week, and are physically unable to work any length of time in the cold. Last night, when I was up on Broadway, it was all I

and the foremen could do to keep them at work. A man has to stand right over them with a club, or precious little work he will get out of them. Then, again, half of them that come here don't want to work. They simply want us to give them a shovel, and, as soon as our backs are turned, they will steal off, sell the shovel for a quarter, and go and buy drinks. Why, look at the showing the department made in former years before this 'American citizen law' was in existence. For instance, look how we handled the streets after the blizzard. In those days we could put two or three thousand men to work at short notice, and the streets would be cleaned up in little or no time. Nowadays we have to take each applicant's history and age, and examine into his claim to citizenship. So far it has cost the city $6,000 extra over the regular pay-roll of our department."

[Guard the gates, Mr. T. B. Aldrich, guard the gates.]

THE STATE AS BLACKMAILER.
[New York Sun.]

CHICAGO, Jan. 12. — When the police were withdrawn from the Pennsylvania road at all crossings and stations yesterday, there was much gossip as to the reason. Mayor Hopkins explained today.

"I wanted transportation for the committee being sent to Washington tonight to work for the new post office," said the Mayor, "and I asked the Pennsylvania Company to help me out. They sent me back word that there was no one here in Chicago who had the authority to issue passes, and that they would have to wire East for them. I thereupon returned answer that it was high time this company had some responsible Chicago agent, and I forthwith deprived them of the privileges they were enjoying through the use of the police. I withdrew every officer working along their line, and it did not take the company long to find some responsible man here in Chicago empowered to act for the company."

"Did you get your passes?"

"I certainly did."

"Are the police going back now?"

"Yes," said the mayor, with a laugh. "The company has seen fit to accommodate the city, and I am going to let them have the police again."

[Police Captain Schmittberger of New York exacted five hundred dollars from the French steamship line in return for furnishing police protection to the company's dock. If he escapes imprisonment, it will be for the reason that he consented to confess and to expose others. In what respect does Mayor Hopkins differ from Captain Schmittberger? And why should he not go to prison?]

OPENINGS FOR THE COACH AND FOUR.
["Justitia" in New York Sun.]

Article XIII., section 5, of the new constitution reads as follows:

No public officer or person elected or appointed to a public office under the laws of the State shall directly or indirectly ask, demand, accept, receive, or consent to receive for his own use or benefit, or for the use or benefit of another, any free pass, free transportation, franking privilege, or discrimination in passenger, telegraph, or telephone rates from any person or corporation, or make use of the same himself or in connection with another.

Not under the spirit, but under the letter of this section, could a State officer ask for a ticket to any point, requesting that the bill for the same be sent to him, the railroad company thereafter making no very strenuous effort to collect the amount?

Again, if, as customary with some railroads, a free excursion is given to some point, and one or more State officers are invited, could they under the letter of this section accept?

Still again, could any State officer, being a personal friend of a railroad official, accept an invitation to travel with him in his private car?

Furthermore, if say, an editor with a pass for himself and one should ask a State officer to go on a trip with him, could the officer accept?

Still further, if a State officer were in Pittsburg, Pa., and some railroad friend should give him a pass to Chicago, or to China, for that matter, and return to Pittsburg, would he be liable if he accepted it?

Justice Parker, in the test case at Kingston, rules that the provision of the constitution must be "construed in the light of existing public statutes." Isn't this putting the cart before the horse? Which is the greater, the constitution or the statutes?

If the framers of section 5 wanted it to conform to existing statutes, why didn't they say so?

Haven't the gentlemen rather "balled themselves up" on the free pass section, anyway?

Instead of making it of constitutional importance, why didn't they arrange to have it part of the oath of office? Then, if an official violated it, he would stand a chance of going to the Sing Sing or other conservatory of official immorals.

FOSTERING AGRICULTURE.
[New York Sun.]

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8. — Secretary Morton is going to grapple with Congress again on the garden-seed question, and make another attempt to deprive the representatives of one of their most sacred perquisites. A war of this kind has been going on ever since he entered the cabinet. He has insisted in all his reports that the free-seed distribution is a humbug and a waste of money, and simply a piece of political demagogy to catch the farmer vote. Last year congress made the usual appropriation of $160,000 for seed distribution, regardless of his protest; but this year he is going to try again to prevent it, or at least limit the practice to what he considers its legitimate usefulness.

Last year the senators and representatives and delegates in congress sent out 8,385,120 packages of seeds to their constituents, and the secretary says that nine-tenths of them were simply to provide the people with seeds to plant in their vegetable gardens and flower beds, and that only one-tenth of the money was used to aid the great agricultural interests of the country. As a rule, the packages of important varieties were so small that it is doubted whether they offered a fair opportunity to test the merits of the seeds.

Under the present methods the secretary is compelled to buy seeds in such quantities that he cannot confine his purchases to new and rare varieties, but has to provide ordinary seeds that can be purchased at any grocery store throughout the country. He demonstrates the lack of appreciation of this generosity on the part of congress by showing that, of the 1,800,000 citizens who received seeds in this promiscuous distribution, only 940 thought enough of them to acknowledge their receipt or make a request for more.

Secretary Morton asserts that the farmers as a rule look with indifference and contempt upon the seeds distributed by the government, and have begun to make a vigorous protest against the waste of public funds in this direction; and that agricultural societies and the agricultural press are crying out against the practice and demanding that it shall cease.

[The crop in which congressmen are mainly interested is the vote crop, and they created the department of agriculture in order to provide themselves with an agency through which to manure the political soil.]

AN EXCUSE FOR A NEW OFFICE.
[New York Sun.]

BOSTON, Jan. 2. — After due deliberation, the board of police of Boston has arrived at the conclusion that many of the saloons of the city dispense villainous whiskey; that it is adulterated, and far below the standard. On this account the board has recommended that the legislature enact a law establishing the office of assayer of liquor for Boston.

BRIGANDS AS LAW-MAKERS AND LAW-ENFORCERS.
[Rome Correspondence of New York Commercial Advertiser.]

Our Campagna has become a second Sardinia in all but fertility of soil; the crop of rascals is astonishingly rich. Knowing people claim that the numerous police vigilants employed by Crispi to hunt down Anarchists play the parts of brigands in off hours to augment their slender salaries; but this accusation is yet unproven, inasmuch as none of the perpetrators of the outrages committed in Rome and neighborhood have so far been caught. The people of Bologna are better off, in that one respect, at least, for their garrison has just succeeded in caging, among other worthies, eleven brigands who have been identified as irregular members of the police force. Sardinia, meanwhile, keeps up her reputation for superior brigantoggio against all newcomers, uniformed or ununiformed. One of the local prefects wrote the other day to the minister of the interior:

"I am more than willing to run down the law-breakers in my district, but can do nothing until their chief, member of parliament X. X., now in your city, has been apprehended. If you authorize me to do so, I will arrest him the next time he appears in this neighborhood at the head of his band."

HER "DEAR BOY" WAS ON THE BENCH.
[New York Tribune.]

One of the first cases brought before Judge Taintor yesterday was that of two women who had been arrested for soliciting in West Third street. One of the women was Jennie Dien, seventeen years old, of No. 99 West Third street. She and Laura White, twenty-two years old, of No. 49 West Third street, were arrested on Saturday night for soliciting a policeman, who was out in citizens' dress. Jennie, when she was brought before Justice Taintor, was all smiles. She laughed in a suggestive manner when she was asked what she had to say to the charge, and said:

"My dear boy, I've got nothing to say to you."

Justice Taintor blushed and looked awkward. He fined the young woman $10.

Laura White, the next prisoner, was a quiet-looking woman. She was not pretty, and she had nothing to say for herself further than that she had been driven to the streets by hunger. Justice Taintor looked stern, and sent the young woman to the island for four months. The woman gasped with astonishment when she was sentenced.

"Why is it," she cried, "that I get four months when my companion gets only $10 fine?"

"Take that woman away," shouted the justice.

And the White woman was taken back to the prison and locked up. The Dien woman paid her fine and went away.

NOT ONE OF "THEM DAMN LITERARY FELLERS."
[New York Sun.]

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 15. — The "Record" tomorrow will say that Delaware inaugurated a governor today that can neither read nor write. For the first time in the history of the State there was no inaugural address, and this set people inquiring. Joshua Marvil was the Republican candidate last fall, and was elected. He is a business man of good repute, and worth at least $150,000, which he made by hard work and shrewd investments. Marvil can sign his name. Knowing his weakness, he secured the services of N. P. Smithers, a leading lawyer, as secretary of state, and Smithers will virtually be the governor.

[If Governor Marvil understands "addition, division, and silence," he is sufficiently qualified for his office.]

AN ASTONISHED ALDERMAN.
[New York Sun.]

PATERSON, Dec. 21. — The members of the police department were denounced yesterday by Alderman John Boylan, of the eighth ward, at a public meeting of the aldermanic police committee. Boylan accused one member of the force of extortion, and another of conduct unbecoming an officer. One of the officers had threatened "to punch his head" because he hadn't voted for free rubber coats for the police, and another had in fact punched his head because he refused to pay him money "as other aldermen had done."

[Paterson police methods are distinctly preferable to those of New York. It is better to bulldoze law-makers than to blackmail law-breakers.]

PROTECTING THE SACRED HOME.
[Press Dispatch from London.]

The agitation against the modern society drama, which makes adultery in high life a leading feature, is beginning to have some effect on the Lord Chamberlain, who, within a few days, has refused to license three new plays.

The Fallen Hero.

[Railway Times.]

We mourn thee, David Swing!
Not for that thou hast died. All flesh must perish.
Not for so slight a thing
Are we afflicted who thy memory cherish
For what thou wert and didst to free mankind
Ere age and failure came
And with mad fears and weakness of the mind
Brought thy grey hairs to shame.

We mourn thee, David Swing!
We have occasion; immortality
'Twas thy delight to sing.
We find the weightiest argument to be
Against thy doctrine. Men like thee grow old,
Conservative and weak
In spirit as in flesh, draw back and scold,
No longer bravely speak.

We mourn thee, David Swing!
We who are young and urge the world ahead
Even as thou didst fling
With stern defiance thy devoted head
Against embuttressed bigotry. We stand
Where thou, thyself, hadst stood,
Wert thou now young again, intrepid, grand,
And full of generous blood.

Hence mourn we, David Swing!
Beecher we mourned before, and Tennyson.
Alas, that age should bring,
Beside a notice that one's task is done,
Decrepitude which makes the man to shrink
Into a puling child,
The radical to a defender sink
Of wealth, by wealth defiled!

We mourn thee, David Swing!
We who when thou art dead, begin to live,
We who begin to sing
When thou art silenced, we, the young, forgive!
In thy youth's prime thou shouldst have gone away:
Death's summons came too late.
We recognize the power of age and pray:
Preserve us from like fate!

Miles Menander Dawson.

The Mysterious Influence.

A Symbolist drama (comedy or tragedy) in two acts.
(With sincere apologies to the author of "Pelléas and Mélisande.")

CHARACTERS.

MURPHY, member of Board of Aldermaniacs.
O'BRIEN, street-cleaning contractor.
Aldermaniacs.

ACT I.

Lobby of Aldermaniac chamber. Murphy and O'Brien discovered talking.

Murphy. There is snow on the ground.

O'Brien. There is.

Murphy (significantly). The streets will need cleaning.

O'Brien. They will.

(Murphy is seen to put his hand, attached to which is an itching palm, behind his back. O'Brien is seen to place something on the palm which seems to ease the itching.)

Murphy. There seem strange influences at work in the air tonight.

O'Brien. There do.

(Murphy enters Aldermaniac chamber. O'Brien remains outside.)

ACT II.

Aldermaniac chamber. Murphy is discovered easing various itching palms.

Murphy. Then the street-cleaning contract is awarded to Mr. O'Brien?

Aldermaniacs. It is.

F.

Goff on Pentecost.

In the remarks made by Recorder Goff on taking his judicial seat, he took occasion to pay his respects to Hugh O. Pentecost as follows:

Indeed, it has been sworn to that it is a common practice in the prisons of this city for wardens and keepers to have and enter into collusive agreements with attorneys to procure them clients, and receive therefore a part of the fees. There are no words in the English language sufficiently strong to condemn such a proceeding; it is worse than highway robbery. And the man who calls himself a lawyer, who enters into such a corrupt and collusive agreement, is not worthy of the dignity of the name, and he degrades an ancient and honorable profession.

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